

E-mail Hoaxes and Chain Letters

Most of us have received chain letters, hoaxes, or urban legends. None of these are damaging to your computer (like a virus). But, they are annoying, sometimes disturbing, and usually inaccurate.

If you receive a hoax, chain letter, or an urban legend – **DON'T PASS IT ON** to your friends or family! It will junk up their inbox, annoy them, or, possibly, alarm them unnecessarily. If you suspect an email may be a hoax, investigate before you pass it on to others.

Here are some examples:

- You will receive a case of M&Ms for forwarding this to 5 friends...
- Bill Gates will send you money...
- Don't open an e-mail named "Jesus saves"...
- Budweiser frogs will destroy your hard drive...
- Write your congressman – the congress is trying to pass a law charging 5 cents per email...
- Needles infected with AIDs found in telephone booth...

Eliminating Junk Email

One of hardest things to control is junk email. Junk e-mail, otherwise known as "spam," consists of messages usually created by telemarketers and sent to millions of email accounts. Advertisers send out millions of email messages to users on the Internet, with the knowledge that even if ten thousand people delete the spam, at least one person will visit their website and purchase their advertised products.

There are a number of different things that can be done to reduce or eliminate junk mail that is being received. While these actions may not prevent every possible spam from being received, it will greatly reduce the amount.

1. **Never use your primary email address on websites**. When buying and/or registering online at any website, you risk having your contact information sold to other companies. Many websites will sell a list of their users to telemarketers, who will sell your email addresses to other advertisers.

2. **Don't "unsubscribe"**. Many telemarketers use special software that will email every possible email address on the Internet. At the bottom of the advertiser's junk mail, there is usually a "unsubscribe" link to a page on their website. As the telemarketer is mass mailing, they usually have no idea what email accounts are active and working, and which accounts do not exist. By going to their unsubscribe page, and entering in your email address, you have just verified a working email address. Instead of decreasing your spam, you have just made it possible for your account to receive much more from other advertisers. You are better off deleting spam, instead of responding to it.